

Toddler Food Safety

What foods present a choking risk for children?
Toddlers delight in feeding themselves. However, parents of young children need to be cautious at the table.

Foods that are hard, round or difficult to chew can sometimes lodge in small airways, causing a child to choke. To be on the safe side, consider the following advice on finger foods for children less than 3 years of age:

Avoid giving hard, or difficult-to-chew-foods such as raw carrots and other crunchy vegetables, hard candy, lollipops, peanuts, and popcorn.

Modify the shape and texture of firm foods. Cut grapes into quarters, hot dogs into fine sticks rather than round slices, chop apples and firm fruits into very small pieces, and cook carrots and hard vegetables until soft, then cut into small pieces.

Keep an eye on small children when they are eating. Small children may eat in a hurry, stuff too much food in their mouths, or chew their food inadequately.

To avoid injuries, children should not be allowed to run or play with food while chewing. Feed small children only when they are sitting down and are in a relaxed atmosphere. Train toddlers to chew their food thoroughly before swallowing.

Learn Basic First Aid and Infant/Child CPR to be prepared to act in the event of choking because any food can be a choking hazard for a child.

